

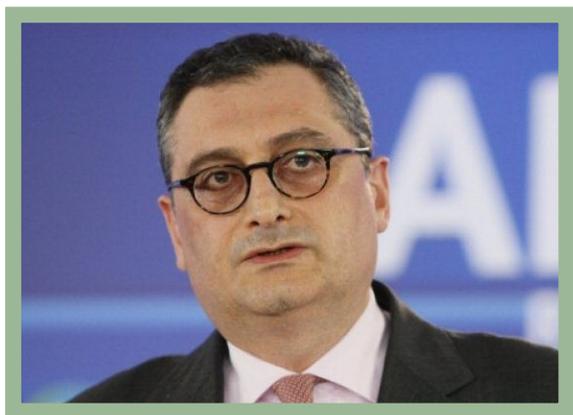
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Russia's Eastern Policy in 2016: Results and Prospects

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THE YEAR 2016 was quite fruitful in terms of our country's relations with Asian countries: Russia's policy in this rapidly developing part of the world is bringing substantial dividends, laying the groundwork for expanding mutually beneficial cooperation in the interest of regional stability and overall growth.

What is especially important is that our country has an active, creative role in Asia. Russia does not engage in building a "balance of forces" to suit itself, but aims to develop a system of interstate relations in the region that would guarantee sta-

bility and general prosperity.

We not simply set a goal but actually converted our dialogue with ASEAN into concrete, mutually beneficial projects covering such high-tech sectors as space, renewable energy, and nano - and biotechnology.

Our country has an active, creative role in Asia. Russia does not engage in building a "balance of forces" to suit itself, but aims to develop a system of interstate relations in the region that would guarantee stability and general prosperity.

Our relations with North Korea have an independent value of their own for us. Our countries are linked by the long-standing and stable bonds of friendship and cooperation and are united by respect for our shared history. The friendly nature of Russian-North Korean ties is evidenced by Russia's regular humanitarian aid to North Korea.

At the same time, the dynamics of bilateral contacts are directly influenced by the military-political situation on the Korean Peninsula. It is a factor in the current decline in bilateral ties, including shrinking bilateral trade and the freezing of promising tripartite infrastructural projects. Pyongyang knows that Russia is interested in the region overcoming its present difficulties.

THERE ARE NO DOUBTS that the importance of Asia for Russia will continue to grow. We are an inalienable part of the political and economic system that is emerging here. Our country's links with the region are backed up by the centuries-old traditions of mutually enriching cooperation. Obviously, the linking of the Russian and regional potentials is a powerful source of growth and strengthening international positions for both us and our neighbors. Moscow is committed to continuing its constructive and creative cooperation with all interested partners with the aim of building a just order and ensuring stability and sustainable development in the vast Asian space.

Quo Vadis, Germany? Landmarks of Recent German History

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MORE THAN 26 YEARS have passed since the reunification of Germany, and this is a good reason to assess how much the country has increased its economic power and raised its status as a European and global political player. Closer associates of former chancellor Helmut Kohl argue that, besides enlarging Germany's territory, the reunification has been responsible for the country's achieving a leading political role in Europe.

At the same time, people in the former East German territories complain that the social security achievements of ex-East Germany are disregarded in the west of the country.

No one can be prohibited from trying to turn nationalists into democrats. That is a noble task. Europe has rich experience of this, but it is a controversial experience with a negative tint.

Mounting threats of terrorism and growing nationalist sentiments in Germany have forced Merkel to change not only her rhetoric but also her tactics - she has expressed support for proposed restrictions on the admission of migrants.

Trump's unpredictable behavior has shocked and perplexed the German establishment, whose main figures, to quote one of the commentators, feel like abandoned children. However, these "children" attack Trump, slamming him, for example, for his plan to build a wall on the border with Mexico and his attempted restrictions in regard to on migrants entering the United States. But they have a short memory: who else but the German government gave strong support to the project of former Ukrainian prime minister Arseny Yatsenyuk to build a wall on Ukraine's border with Russia...

THE RUSSIANS REMEMBER the contributions of reunited Germany to the construction of new statehood, civil society institutions, a new economic model, and a multiparty system in post-Soviet Russia. In the period of disastrous shortages of goods and shock therapy that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, the German government, German municipal authorities, and a large army of German civil society volunteers gave practical help not only to Moscow and St. Petersburg but also to small Russian towns and villages.

Most likely, Germany's policy toward Russia will continue to be determined by Berlin's impressions of the "Crimean Spring" and by its transatlantic solidarity. At the behest of Barack Obama and following the convictions of Merkel, Germany will continue to seek the role of an irreplaceable dogmatic preacher of European values and to strictly monitor compliance with them in the Russian spiritual space. It would take Berlin a lot of effort and quite a few years to make the Russians trust its words and promises again. But there is only a remote, almost illusory prospect of bringing back the degree of confidence that existed in the Russian Empire, in the Soviet Union, and, until some years ago, in post-Soviet Russia. Yet this doesn't rule out frank exchanges of opinions on bilateral and international issues, intensive cultural, scientific and youth exchanges, a lively dialogue between the two countries' civil societies, or joint war commemoration activities.

Crisis Situations in the Mediterranean Regions

Author: Franco Frattini

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We will start by considering a common denominator that unites and characterizes all the recent crises: the human dimension of the dramas that afflict the world today. In other words, how to concretely ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms, humanitarian issues, the rule of law, democratic institutions, the issues of national minorities, information, culture, and education.

More concretely, there are wars often reported on the front pages of newspapers, which deserve the opening of the television news, monopolize the public debate and remain forever printed in the history books. But there have been and there are just as bloody and shocking, severe, long-term wars, which unfortunately fell into oblivion. In the Mediterranean, for example, there are regional tensions which are little known, but nevertheless have great geo-strategic and political

repercussions, but are unfortunately known only to a few insiders.

However, some economic factors are destabilizing the area too. If we look to the entire Mediterranean basin, widespread poverty is surely the first among them. Maghreb, Mashreq, Egypt... A real, never defused time bomb that has fueled discontent and created revolutions over time.

You hopefully remember that extreme poverty and unemployment were among the triggers of the Arab uprisings, which I prefer not to call "springs," given the total failure of many of their objectives. The radicalization behind all that is a path with many ramifications. Certainly, it has a religious ramification, because it hits through the preaching of Imams urging a Koranic reading inspired by violence. Those of you who studied Islamic doctrine or profess the Muslim religion know that, unlike my religion, the Christian Catholic, there is no authority that can infallibly tell what is the interpretation of the sacred text. So you will find a sura of the Koran inciting to murder all infidels, while another urges peace, reconciliation and embracing other peoples. Depending on the preaching, on interpretation, we have readings of true Islam very different from one another.

There are many differences between the terrorist organizations, but we must admit that all of them have been strengthened because of the Western weakness, our weakness in defending our values.

In one word, there have been lack of political leadership and mistakes made by all: no one is immune from error. From what we have seen so far, there is one conclusion to be drawn. It is not the case of addressing each crisis areas of the Mediterranean following a case-by-case strategy. Today, it would be essential that the big global players, perhaps taking advantage of the upcoming UN General Assembly where they will all meet, would give rise to a sort of Mediterranean Compact: that is, a permanent network of contacts among all those who, global or regional actors, have a word to say for the stability of that region. If this does not happen, we will continue to follow pieces of different crises, not even specific crises.

The Yemen Crisis: A Ticking Time Bomb?

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IN JUNE 2015, which marked the third month of the war in Yemen, the U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon described the situation in this country as a "ticking time bomb" and called on all parties involved to take prompt action as quickly as possible to halt the killings, of which over 50 per cent were civilians. He referred to the military intervention of the Saudi coalition in Yemen. This regional conflict can hardly be called a civil war, because a multitude of foreign actors are involved in it, all of them having interests of their own, which often contradict each other. The United Nations and governments of many leading countries

have long condemned a humanitarian catastrophe in Yemen, which has negatively influenced the image of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) and its strategic partners on the international arena.

The war has brought into sharp focus the fact that none of the goals officially declared by the supporters of the international military intervention in Yemen can ever be achieved by the means employed by the coalition forces. There is nobody left in the entire world who would not acknowledge a need to transfer to political settlement of the conflict, including the official spokesmen of the KSA itself. However, in defiance of common sense, this fact does not in any way affect the military course which is leading from one catastrophe to another.

Many European and American policy-makers, as well as members of the European Parliament, have already realized that the only way to normalize the situation in Yemen is to resume political dialog.

Yemen's blockade has turned into a double-edged instrument designed to impact the political situation in the country. The humanitarian disaster was supposed to provoke the outbursts of popular discontent with the Yemeni alliance, which had refused to accept the conditions of Riyadh, essentially boiling down to a demand to surrender, as was provided for by Resolution 2216 by the UN Security Council.

IN THE PAST 19 MONTHS, the Yemen crisis has become a large-scale humanitarian catastrophe and a genuine political disaster for the Yemeni people. Instead of the assistance promised by the neighboring kingdom in solving the country's problems, it has lost in the first year of war over 30% of its GDP; in 2016, the economic slump may amount to another 40%. Over 82% of the Yemeni citizens are badly in need of humanitarian aid, while 7 to 14 million people starve, suffer from a deficit of clean water and a lack of medical aid. Children, constituting around 50% of the Yemeni population, have been affected worst of all.

The main reason underlying the crisis is not a civil war, but a foreign military intervention. The

main driving forces responsible for continuing and expanding the crisis in Yemen are also outside the country. In the pursuit of military supremacy in the region, Riyadh refuses to cooperate with the United Nations. By transferring military command of the Yemeni part of the coalition forces to General Ali Mohsen, President Hadi has reduced his ability to control the situation and induced the members of the Yemeni alliance to consolidate political leadership in Sana'a. The situation in the North can easily grow into a regional disaster. A conflict is brewing in the South fraught with the possible fragmentation of that part of the country. The central issue of peace settlement is a fast termination of the military operation by the Saudi coalition and a removal of blockade to ease the delivery of humanitarian cargoes to the affected population. This is the only way to stop a mechanism making "tick the Yemen time bomb."

Author: Shamsbad Akhtar

Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) This interview was conducted by Yury Minayev, deputy editor-in-chief of International Affairs



A lot is being done in the Asia-Pacific to advance the program of intraregional connectivity. But these efforts can hardly be successful without progress in unifying transport systems. It is due to progress in transport systems that trade within the Asia-Pacific is developing intensively and is second in volume only to its trade with the European Union.

In my view, the main achievement of ESCAP is the single regional action program for sustainable transport connectivity that was adopted in the middle of the last century.

It is essential to go over from the unimodal system of transport development to a multimodal system. That is one of our current tasks. We are also planning to launch an interconnectivity scheme, which is a task that needs integration.

Another task we set ourselves is to move from overall connectivity to regional connectivity within the borders of a country - gaining access to rural localities, solving the urban traffic jam problem, making urban traffic more secure, and developing intellectual transport systems.

We see both initiatives, the Chinese one and the Russian one, as inalienable parts of the general initiative of economic cooperation within the Asia-Pacific. This general initiative underlies an ESCAP draft resolution that we are going to submit for approval and a comprehensive report on regional economic cooperation and integration that we hope the members of our organization will be able to familiarize themselves with in 2017.

The matter doesn't center around the country that will take the leadership role. There must be absolute understanding among the developing countries of what the One Belt, One Road initiative is, and it needs to be clear what results those countries want this initiative to produce.

There exist three factors of global uncertainty. One of them is Brexit with its potential consequences. Another is the policy of the future American administration. And then the future price of oil - since there are few countries in our region that export oil, most them are dependent on imports of energy. So, a decrease in the oil price would benefit Asia as a whole.

I have always tried to pay more attention to those 33 countries and to find a way to convince Russia, China and other world leaders that those countries should have their needs satisfied so that eventually everyone stands to gain. We are very lucky that China, by having put forward its One Belt, One Road initiative, stresses the importance of supporting some of the countries in this group.

State Sovereignty and Jurisdiction in the Context of International Information Security

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ONE OF TODAY'S KEY GLOBAL PROBLEMS is a risk of malevolent or hostile political use of information and communication technology (ICT) by some states with consequent threats to international peace and security. This risk has been addressed by the Russian president,¹ the leaders of other nations, and the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security (GGE).

The GGE's point that international law is applicable to the global ICT environment implies an important political task for the international community. It is, however, a problem to which no acceptable solution has been found yet despite numerous studies of various aspects of it.

This article examines key issues of application of international law to activities by governments in the ICT environment and to attempts to settle international disputes that may arise in this environment by peaceful means.

To minimize risks of erroneous classification of incidents in the ICT environment and to identify nongovernmental hostile users of ICTs, one might suggest setting up a system of objectivization and attribution of dangerous incidents in the ICT environment.

The article also puts forward suggestions for revisions of international law to consolidate the sovereignty of states in the ICT environment and enable them to unrestrictedly exercise their jurisdiction in this environment as a necessary condition for international security and peace.

SOVEREIGNTY in the ICT environment is an important aspect of the general sovereignty of a state. It lays the basis for a state's jurisdiction in the telecommunications and information environments. The jurisdiction of states in the ICT environment is partly based on international legal custom, which, in a period of international tension, may endanger the security and independence of a country.

Threats to international peace and security because of the increasing risk of hostile use of ICTs by some states against others can be reduced by greater international determination to follow the GGE's recommendations for "norms, rules or principles of responsible behaviour of States aimed at promoting an open, secure, stable, accessible and peaceful ICT environment"³⁷ and by new more effective international legislation.

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HOW WILL RUSSIAN-U.S. RELATIONS develop in 2017? So far, from all indications, not according to the best-case scenario.

Groundless accusations continue to be made against Moscow, including its alleged involvement in hacking attacks and interference in the U.S. election process. Russia's role in fighting ISIS, a terrorist organization banned in Russia, is belittled. Meanwhile, the NATO armed

forces are stepping up their activity near our western borders.

The unprecedented worsening of relations between our countries over the past six years causes particular concern. These relations are extremely asymmetric: The US's sharply negative and absolutely biased interpretation of Russia's foreign policy actions increases the danger of uncontrolled processes in many regions.

Now it is up to the new U.S. administration to decide whether it will be possible within the next one or two years to move from deterioration to stabilization and the subsequent improvement of relations or whether the problems that have piled up will develop into a state of intense confrontation on many key issues.

In the final analysis, the "reset" of our relations that Barack Obama declared at the beginning of his presidential career turned into a fierce attack against Russia's economy, policy and ideology. During his presidency, a new cold war was effectively unleashed against Russia.

Today, the American push toward economic and military-political unipolarity is especially pronounced in its relations with Russia. Nevertheless, I cannot rule out that conditions will emerge in the White House and Congress for a review of ingrained prejudices and the lack of trust.

"THE WORLD IS IN CHAOS," former U.S. secretary of state Henry Kissinger said in a recent interview. "Fundamental upheavals are occurring in many parts of the world simultaneously, most of which are governed by disparate principles. We are therefore faced with two problems: first, how to reduce regional chaos; second, how to create a coherent world order based on agreed-upon principles that are necessary for the operation of the entire system."

Unfortunately, at this stage, the U.S. elite remains rather confrontational toward Russia. More political, economic, defense, and ideological concessions are being demanded from its strategic partner. However, our society can no longer put up with "retreating maneuvers." So, the country's leadership, which is absolutely not in the mood for confrontation with anybody, does not intend to abandon national interests. Nor does it intend to review international cooperation priorities to suit the political situation of the moment.

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THIS ARTICLE is a logical continuation of my previous essay, "Barack Obama: Preliminary Results of Presidency". Today, we can say that he has missed his chance to be remembered as a peacemaker and a realistically minded president who knew how to defuse international tension rather than fan it to worldwide dimensions. Indeed, he did all he could to leave behind a wasteland of American-Russian relations and not the slightest hope of positive changes any time soon. His last press conference as the president of the United States with less than two days in office, however, did not exclude that in future we might hear from him more balanced and reasonable statements.

The new and old presidents may feel sympathy to each other, or be neutral or even have negative feelings. In some cases, rejection was hardly controlled of which the Truman/Eisenhower case can serve as a pertinent example.

Today, it is hard to say whether the exchange between the 33rd and 34th presidents took place or not. Its description, however, and the scoffing are very illustrative and symptomatic. At that time, the inauguration and transfer of power from the old to the new administration were practically perfect.

Trump was grossly underestimated by the Clinton team: his faults were too numerous and too obvious. Experienced political technologists expected an easy victory in the anti-Trump game: the cocksure Republican would be effectively pushed aside to end the chess game in a political checkmate.

The results sent the Democratic headquarters into a shock: the guaranteed victory escaped from under the nose of Hillary Clinton leaving behind a trail of failed hopes. What happened could not have happen by definition: it was the world turned upside down.

In the last months of Obama's presidency, the amount of hatred or even dirt thrown at Moscow was amazing. One found it hard to believe that this was possible. Moscow refrained from answering in kind; it preserved its dignity and kept the doors open for better relations some time in future.

This fact, and several others, means that Obama was a weak president who never fulfilled many of his election promises, both at home and on the international stage, even though some of them were quite reasonable.

Having assumed power, Donald Trump immediately cancelled a great number of Obama's programs and initiatives designed to affirm his outstanding role as the 44th president of the United States.

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IT SEEMS that the West is gradually turning to conservatism. At least this is how Donald Trump's victory at the 2016 presidential elections can be interpreted together with Brexit and the much stronger positions of the right-wing parties in Europe. The left liberal forces that fell into the trap of their own ideology and propaganda proved unable to adequately assess the developments in their own countries and elsewhere in the world.

Amid the failure of the multicultural ideological model, a product of the widely propagandized liberal "end of history" born by the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the ruling elites are trailing behind the changing sentiments of the masses that want to revive the values of national sovereignty and the traditional interpretations of morals.

Trump's victory caused a revolution in the political ideas of the elites who had learned to look at the Western liberal democracy in its multicultural garbs as the summit of social evolution. They had to revise their ideas about the processes unfolding across the world and the social and economic priorities of the countries of the collective West.

Obama tried to revive the "American dream" of minorities; Trump will try to rekindle the "American dream" of the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants, the "blue collars" and all those who still cherish the centuries-old ideas of dignity of life and good and evil.

THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN stirred up a veritable information storm of commentaries and assessments in American society. Political gurus of the United States made their own contribution to the ongoing processes.

Revolutionary motives can be detected in what conservative-minded politician Patrick Buchanan wrote about the 2016 American presidential elections.

FORBES MAGAZINE summed up Obama's presidency and the 2016 election race in the United States by ranking the outgoing American president as the 48th in its annual list of the world's most powerful people. President of Russia Vladimir Putin took number one spot followed by newly elected President Donald Trump. This is not a coincidence: the steadily complicating world needs leaders able to make decisions.

DONALD TRUMP's shocking statements suggested that America's foreign policy would be reformatted on the grand scale.

Even if his desire to strengthen the bilateral Russian-American relationships is sincere, he might be confronted with systemic opposition since foreign policy decisions of the President strongly depend on the Congress.

After the election campaign, Trump has somewhat readjusted his rhetoric; his political ideas, likewise, might become closer to those represented by the system. Today, he is ready to revise his attitude to NATO and lower the U.S. involvement in global affairs. Time will show whether he will manage to change the relations of long standing inside the alliance.

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I ARRIVED IN HAVANA three days after Fidel Castro's funeral. The city was returning to its normal life except that on the streets there were numerous pictures of the Comandante.

During Cuba's nine-day mourning, there were debates on our television on Fidel's legacy. I don't know who had the brainwave to dig through the Comandante's record before the final honors were paid to him, and who needed those attacks on the deceased.

The high-profile anchor cited an estimate of the ratio between Cuban emigres in the United States and the population of the Caribbean island itself. He didn't mention the huge numbers of ethnic Russians who found themselves abroad overnight 25 years ago.

I was listening to all that and wondering what was happening to this world.

They were talking about a man who had just passed away and whose ideas had for more than half a century reigned over the minds of millions of people in many countries; a man who had become for those people a symbol of dignity, justice and liberation from diktat; a politician who influenced the world history of the latter half of the 20th century. He survived many U.S. presidents and general secretaries of the Soviet Communist Party. Can their historical roles be compared to his? You don't have to like him but you can't afford not to acknowledge his personality. Surely, Fidel was a man of his epoch, the era of Soviet socialism, the Cold War, a bipolar world, and national liberation movements. He followed the logic of that era and was one of its loyal and outstanding soldiers with all the controversial aspects and shortcomings of his rule. He defended Cuba from a mercenary military invasion. He prevented the country from being crushed by the financial and economic embargo imposed on it and by attempts to isolate it. Any assessments of what he did should be based on criteria of those times, criteria that many young people of today would probably find hard to comprehend.

By assessing and judging Fidel we primarily judge ourselves - ourselves as we were just a third of a century ago.

Cuba, "the island of crimson dawn," is part of our life, our history, our present, and hopefully our future. We've learned to cooperate in a pragmatic way and to be close friends but with no affectation. We've made it clear that we have interests there. Cuba has again become our reliable and consistent ally in global affairs.

French Socialism in Crisis

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HAVING WON in the second round the primaries of the French Left. Benoit Hamon became the presidential candidate of the Socialist Party, an unexpected or even sensational victory that perfectly fits, however, the latest election trends in the West.

THE FRENCH KNOW that the state hasn't got €300 billion to spend and that the 32-hour workweek will do nothing good to economic growth. Hamon's victory speaks of the high level of protest sentiments in society.

At the Socialist primaries, people did not vote for Hamon but rather against the political class and its high-level left members

who, led by President Hollande, had failed to attain the aims and achieve the tasks that had brought them to the Élysée Palace in 2012 in the first place. Hollande had promised to fight unemployment: during the five years of his presidency, more people lost their jobs. Hamon, on the other hand, who left his post of the Minister of Education in 2014 to protest official politics, is seen as a Frondeur among the Socialists.

Hamon's success is a good sign for Macron: many of those who voted for Hamon did not treat the left primaries seriously. It looks like in April 2017 the French left will vote for much more popular Macron who will compete with François Fillon and Marine Le Pen with good chances to win.

FIVE YEARS of Hollande's presidency pushed French socialism into a crisis. In late 2016, the coming primaries were presented as the first step toward a revival. However, the victory of Benoît Hamon who offered a Utopian program is likely to deepen the crisis and postpone the revival. Funding will cause another headache. To vote at primaries, people had to pay yet the low turnout at the two rounds did not bring enough money to finance a large-scale presidential campaign of the party's new leader.

The fact that Emmanuel Macron, a recent Socialist, resolutely refused to join forces with any of those who ran in the primaries, at least in the next few months, speaks volumes. He deemed it necessary to point out that he did not believe in the party's future. Macron is not alone. This means that Benoît Hamon must cope with many challenges: so far there are no victories in sight.

The 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between Russia and South Africa

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AT FIRST SIGHT, Russia and South Africa are located so far from each other and are so different from each other, and yet they have much in common, including their immense, boundless spaces, a rich cultural diversity of different regions, and the thorny historical paths. Although in February 2017 we celebrated the 25th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, it should not go unspoken that the history of Russian-South African contacts dates back several centuries.

For many years to come, it was rather an epistolary novel or a collection of travel writing, and our interaction was limited to sporadic visits of Cape Town by Russian navy servicemen or researchers. Special

mention should be made in this context of Captain Vassily Golovnin who became famous for his daring escape from arrest by British authorities from the Cape Town port in 1808 (on board the Diana sloop). The contacts gradually developed, and in the second half of the 19th century, our Russian consul was already working in Cape Town.

The agenda of our cooperation with South Africa demonstrate not only the strategic nature of our partnership and the current high level of interstate interaction on a broad range of issues, but also a great potential for their further development.

The Soviet citizens could easily get to know about everyday life in South Africa: South African writers and poets, including those who were banned and oppressed by their own government, were widely published in our country.

In the 1980s-1990s, the processes of internal transformations underway in the Republic of South Africa and the USSR also affected bilateral relations. The level of interaction between Moscow and Pretoria began to grow at a quick pace.

A milestone event was the official visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to South Africa in 2006; it was the first ever visit to sub-Saharan Africa of a Russian leader. During the visit, the parties signed a Treaty of Friendship and Partnership between our two countries, laying down a political foundation of bilateral interaction at the present stage.

Over the past few years, the volume and quality of bilateral ties in the field of culture have significantly grown. Russian music, ballet and dance groups are enthusiastically met by the South African public. After a serious preliminary work by both sides, the cross-cultural years of Russian culture in South Africa and of South Africa in Russia were held in Johannesburg and Moscow in 2016 - the first of their kind in the new history of bilateral relations. The Osipov State Russian Folk Orchestra performed in the cities of South Africa, while Russian cities warmly welcomed

popular South African performers. The opening ceremony of the cross-cultural year in Moscow was attended by the Minister of Arts and Culture of South Africa Nathi Mthethwa.

Naturally, much more work remains to be done, primarily in the trade and economic sphere, interregional ties, tourism development, and humanitarian contacts. It is extremely important to constantly maintain the historical memory of our close collaboration during the years of struggle against apartheid, closely work on making the citizens of our countries, primarily the young people, better know and understand each other. Our countries are natural partners, and our peoples who seem so different at first glance, have many things in common.

The essence and agenda underlying our cooperation with South Africa demonstrate not only the strategic nature of our partnership and the current high level of interstate interaction on a broad range of issues, but also a great potential for their further development. And our goal is to tap this potential to the full.

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THE START of the 21st century can with good reason be considered a landmark in the development of Russian public diplomacy. After the difficult and unpredictable 1990s, the Russian leadership began to pay serious attention to creating a positive international image for Russia. Building such an image, informing foreign audiences and Russians about the country's foreign policy, and establishing close contacts with citizens and elites in foreign countries have been the main areas of activity in Russian public diplomacy.

Rosstrudnichestvo is the main instrument of soft power through which Russia seeks to achieve a positive international image for itself. Building closer ties with Russian-speaking communities abroad is one of the

agency's priorities. Work that is done by Rosstrudnichestvo in tackling it includes intensive collaboration with the Russian Foreign Ministry in organizing the World Congress of Compatriots Living Abroad, an event held in Russia at least once in three years. Rosstrudnichestvo has taken on the organization of the regular workshop at the congress that is entitled "Contribution of Compatriots to the Preservation of the Russian-Speaking Space, Education and the Russian Language in Their Countries of Residence."

Outside Russia, enrollment of foreign citizens in Russian educational institutions is mainly carried out through Russian centers for science and culture that are administered by Rosstrudnichestvo. In addition, regional offices of Rosstrudnichestvo regularly provide information about Russian universities via educational exhibitions such as the International Education Fair and Education and Career. Such exhibitions bring together not only leading Russian institutions but also smaller regional universities, thereby offering potential entrants a variety of schools to choose from.

Support for the Russian government's policy toward Russian-speaking communities abroad is a separate field of Russian public diplomacy.

To sum up, Russian public diplomacy has undergone essential changes since the beginning of the 21st century. In these 16 years, public diplomacy has been put on a solid legal basis, and a series of amendments has been introduced to adjust it to global changes and to revisions of Russia's foreign policy strategy. Public diplomacy activities have included some large-scale projects in this period.

To pursue successful public diplomacy, Russia should continue to work along the routes that it has chosen, using a comprehensive and systemic approach and ensuring efficient coordination among its government, NGOs and businesses. Today, quite many agencies and organizations are involved in public diplomacy, but there still is no one-hundred-percent coordination among them.

Alexander Benckendorff's Unaccomplished Mission and Its Lessons

Author: A. Kramarenko

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary



THE ELEVENTH OF JANUARY of this year was the 100th anniversary of the death of the Russian Empire's last ambassador to the United Kingdom, Count Alexander Benckendorff, who is buried inside the Westminster Cathedral in London, the main Catholic church of England and Wales. This anniversary was, in a sense, a reminder of a mission that Benckendorff had in London, where he arrived in 1903, but was unable to fulfill.

When the threat of a pan-European war loomed large and all principal European nations were tirelessly building military and political alliances, a critical question occupied the minds of those involved in that race - what position Britain would take in that emerging geopolitical setup.

It was German aggressions that helped the British clarify their strategic thinking and made them realize that Britain needed peace in Europe as much as France and Russia did. It seems that even one repetition of the mistake it made during the Franco-Prussian war would be too costly for Britain regardless of any circumstances - class prejudice, ideological considerations, or anything else. There have been plenty of facts in history proving that geopolitics gains the upper hand over all other factors. It is no surprise therefore that today, at a time of forthcoming Brexit and Donald Trump's "global revolution," Western observers and historians, including British historian Niall Ferguson, still see that old geopolitical imprint on present-day European affairs.

It is more obvious today than ever before that the geostrategic legacy of the Cold War, including institutions such as NATO and the European Union, is an increasingly serious obstacle to the development of a clear collective security system in Europe

A fiasco of the euro zone and the European Union in general would result in a new form of incompatibility of Germany with the rest of Europe, this time economic incompatibility.

The Euro-Atlantic space has to deal with problems that the essentially new global competitive environment confronts it with. But more importantly, each country in it has to keep its living standards up and think of its future. Artificial trade barriers and economic dividing lines in Europe can't help any longer - they become a power that generates its own logic. For example, the use of the EU's Eastern Partnership for geopolitical ends led to the Ukrainian crisis and has proven that a policy that runs against economic logic is a road to nowhere. This means that Euro-Atlantic political unity is unachievable without the creation of a common economic space for the entire region based on World Trade Organization norms and principles.

Link Campus, an International University in Rome

Author: Yu. Sayamov

Professor, Head of the UNESCO Chair on Global Problems and Emerging Social and Ethical Challenges for Large Cities and Their Population, Faculty of Global Processes, M. V. Lomonosov Moscow State University



IN SUMMER 2012, a delegation of the Faculty of Global Processes of Moscow State University established cooperation with the London Academy of Diplomacy. The following year, the honorary director of the academy, Professor Joseph Mifsud, took part in the Globalistics 2013 international congress at Moscow University, and, during his stay in the Russian capital, suggested that our faculty join a project to reform Link Campus University in Rome to give it the nature of a genu-

inely international educational institution.

Joseph Mifsud, who is a native of Malta and has headed one of the departments at the University of Malta, proposed an overhaul of Link, a project that would combine some of the best aspects of the Anglo-Saxon and classical European systems of higher education and involve use of achievements by Russia, China and India and other non-Western nations that are higher education leaders and have made significant contributions to current formats for training excellent specialists in various fields.

One of the borrowings from the Anglo-Saxon model was the campus principle. The campus would be fitted with facilities for recreation, sports and participation in public affairs as well as with residences. The classical European system would be the source of standards for education. Non-Western achievements would be used to make education meet modern and future practical needs, and for this reason the authors of the project were keen to cooperate with Lomonosov Moscow State University, one of the world's leading universities and the flagship of the Russian higher education system, a system that has rich traditions and unique experience.

This international center for research and education is expected to represent a new model of campus, a campus that, on the one hand, provides students with all they need for education, development and a fulfilling life but, on the other, does not isolate itself and intensively builds external ties in a bid to raise the university's education standards and ensure the organic involvement of its graduates in international processes. Hence the words "link" and "campus" in the university's name.

Link Campus is an integrated facility for high-level specialist training, advanced research, and the development of educational and cognitive techniques to meet the needs of today's post-industrial information society.

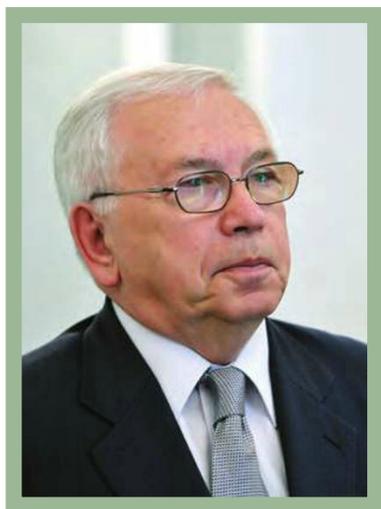
The curricula of Link and our Faculty alike include international relations, the teaching of the

theory and practice of diplomacy, and mandatory advanced courses of English as a language of international communication. This leaves an imprint on all other courses taught in English and other languages, including Russian

Our Italian guests were impressed by the achievements of the UNESCO Chair on Global Problems and Emerging Social and Ethical Challenges for Large Cities and Their Population, which has existed at the Faculty of Global Processes since 2010. Link considers setting up its own entity of this kind and using the experience of our UNESCO Chair as the basis for this project.

Author: V. Lukin

Member of the Federation Council, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Doctor of Science (History)



POST-IMPERIAL and post-Soviet Russia has just started its quest for self-identity. This is neither good nor bad: its new state hypostasis is only twenty-five years old which makes it not an easy task to send "urbi et orbi" a clear and convincing message about its essence and the optimal ways of its realization.

Today, foreign policy successes and failures or, to put it differently, the efficiency of foreign policy are measured by the greater/smaller possibilities of the state to, first, ensure security of its territory and its citizens at the lowest possible cost and, second, create an external climate conducive to its economic, social and cultural development.

The latter directly depends on whether the state can effectively main-

tain peaceful foreign policy environment close to its borders or at a considerable distance.

During the twenty-five years of the contemporary Russian State as we know it today, the quest for the so-called national idea was regularly revived, albeit with different acuteness, as the center of nationwide debates. To my mind, this type of quest is useless. Recently, the President of Russia offered the following definition: "We don't have and there can't be any other unifying idea, apart from patriotism." This is true yet the term patriotism belongs to the category of values rather than meanings and concepts. We all know that values can be interpreted; we all know that they tolerate different, or even opposite, interpretations.

There are situations in which a strong pan-Slavic self-identification gives rise to pan-Turkic or other sentiments among other categories of the citizens of Russia. The concept of "eternal historical holy Rus" promoted by certain top figures of the Russian Orthodox Church further complicates the already complicated task of forming Russia's civil state identity. On the one hand, this concept is intended to form spiritual ties among "all tribes and peoples" that have today or had in the past any historical connections with any Russian Orthodox state units that existed long ago. On the other, this concept raises certain doubts.

Obviously, to consolidate Russia's positions in the world for many years to come, we need a solid internal foundation that should rest on serious structural changes in economy, social and cultural spheres and in the scientific and educational sector.

In fact, the national mentality that will determine the main trends of Russia's foreign policy will inevitably rely on the shared conviction that we should work together to adapt the unique wealth we have inherited from the previous generations - the vast space - to the imperatives of the rapidly changing times. This is a challenge fiercer than those with which our ancestors managed to cope. For Europe, Eurasia and the rest of the world this trend in Russia's national identity is not confrontational. It does not challenge and should not challenge our far and near abroad. This is our challenge and we should respond to it with dignity. This is what patriotism is about.



Armen Oganessian, *Editor-in-Chief of the journal International Affairs (Russia)*

A quarter of a century has passed since the disintegration of the USSR and the formation of the CIS. This is a considerable historical period that gives us food for thought and discussion, as a result of which we could not only draw conclusions regarding the status quo of the Commonwealth but also outline its development paths for the future. At the same time, it is

obvious that we are going through a very complex and dynamic stage that is leading to deeper integration.

I suggest that in the course of our conference we not only present reports but also share our views and evaluations.



Georgy Muradov, *Deputy Chairman, Council of Ministers, Republic of Crimea, Permanent Representative of Republic of Crimea to the President of Russia (Russia)*

MR. CHAIRMAN, dear friends, participants of the forum, on behalf of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Crimea and on behalf of Sergey Valeryevich Aksyonov, the head of the Republic of Crimea, I welcome you to our regular forum, which has been held in Yalta for many years now. This is a great honor

to us. As S.V. Aksyonov noted, International Affairs' conferences are a special club of intellectuals that is of major importance for Crimea, because it addresses both the most pressing contemporary problems and the problems that are related to the fate of Crimea today. Judging by the agenda, this tradition continues.

Compared to the periods of the escalation of the Cold War in the 1970s-1980s, the public perception of the word "war," especially among young people, has changed considerably. Maybe computer games or maybe historical amnesia has weakened the acuteness of the perception of this notion and the sense of danger related to the nuclear threat. It seems that the world has more than one life and that, like in a game, it will be possible to move to a new level. In reality, the situation is no laughing matter.

Since NATO keeps talking about building up its cooperation with Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia, obviously, we also should offer military partnership to certain European countries, including EU and NATO members.

The growing military-political alliance between NATO and the EU and the emphasis that is put on Euro-Atlantic solidarity in NATO documents are telling. Perhaps it is time for Russia to start talking about mobilizing Eurasian partnership and solidarity, among other issues, on Crimea,

with its partners in the CSTO, the EAEU, the CIS, and the Union State.



Mikhail Yevdokimov, *Director, First CIS Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Russia)*

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov sent a message of greetings to conference participants:

"I wholeheartedly welcome the participants in this conference, which International Affairs magazine holds in Yalta with support from the Foreign Ministry of Russia.

"Over the past six years, this forum has developed into a respected platform for constructive discussions on the current issues of cooperation in the vast expanses of the Commonwealth of Independent States. An ambitious agenda and an open and creative atmosphere attract many influential delegates from the ministries and agencies, research and expert communities and the Russian and foreign media.

"Our foreign policy priorities include the development of multifaceted interaction with the CIS countries and the strengthening of the integration structures in which Russia is a member. When Russia assumes the rotating CIS presidency in 2017, we will continue to strengthen our multifaceted cooperation and promote and coordinate regional integration processes which have become an integral part of a comprehensive interstate dialogue.

"The key task is to tap the huge potential of integration within the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) in order to enhance the competitiveness of the member states and improve the living standards of their people. We are interested in further developing mutually beneficial ties between the EAEU and other states and their integration associations, including with a view to implementing the Greater Eurasian Partnership initiative which President of Russia Vladimir Putin has advanced.

"I am convinced that your conference will be conducive to finding the best ways to achieve these goals, enhancing Crimea's investment attractiveness, implementing promising projects in the region and strengthening friendship, confidence and mutual understanding between the nations of our continent.

"I wish you productive sessions and all the best.

"Sergey Lavrov."



Alexander Stoppe, *Head of the Analytics Department at the Permanent Committee of the Union State of Russia and Belarus (Russia)*

UNIFICATION with a high level of economic integration on an economic basis alone has its limits, and without elements of trust, humanitarian bonds, and cooperation in countering shared threats and challenges, unification processes may also be restricted.

As such, integration processes in the post-Soviet space have significant advantages: The people who live there have extensive experience not only in cooperation but also a common historical fate.

This is why the opponents of Eurasian integration concentrate their efforts on discrediting history and national and civilizational relations, and setting the Russian people against the peoples of the former USSR.

It is also essential to understand and take into account that contemporary Eurasian integration has not only an economic but also a civilizational aspect. It is a very important factor that requires serious discussion, without politicking or emotions, because it has a substantial impact on the future of the Eurasian space and is crucial to whether it will remain a unique phenomenon of world history or will be buried under the wave of globalization.



Antonio Rondon Garcia, *Chief Editor of Prensa Latina in Russia (Cuba)*

HISTORIAN ERIC HOBSBAWM wrote in his book *Age of Extremes*: "We should either change or die." I am convinced that the paradigm of power based on domination, which has been the axis of gravity for the entire modern world in the past few centuries, should be juxtaposed with elementary concern for the collective responsibility for the common future of the Earth

and the humankind.

Regarding a slowdown of progressive development trends in Brazil, Argentina, and to some extent in Venezuela, Arce noted that it would be grossly unjust to blame for this indirect regress a new mode of production, which has been trying to hack its way through the impenetrable jungles of the crisis-torn, although still strong and domineering capitalism, and to call into question the quality of political leadership, without taking into account the historical context and the exacerbated class struggle.

Pope Francis would not go no further than to state that the situation in some countries of the region, where major social achievements have been made benefitting most of the population, arouses suspicions, that this situation has not been developing normally and logically, and is extremely dangerous for the overall political stability in the world.

We should always bear in mind that neoliberalism has acquired a new lease of life and is aimed at fragmenting the region, destroying all that has been achieved in the field of regional integration, creating unprecedented and domineering chains of the so-called new knowledge economy and its agreements on intellectual property, in order to perpetuate the technological dependence of peripheral countries and impose on them their ideological products, says the correspondent of *Prensa Latina*.



Sergey Glazyev, *Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Chairman of the Academy's Council on Comprehensive Problems of Eurasian Economic Integration, Modernization, Competitiveness, and Sustainable Development*

IN MAY 2015, the leaders of Russian and China signed an agreement to integrate the Eurasian Economic Union with the Silk Road Economic Belt. To be put into practice, this agreement, which was signed

in Moscow, needs a concrete mechanism to integrate development strategies of the two countries. It is assumed that the TEPR would be realized by an international consortium including corporations, investment institutions, and regional administrations. The anti-Russian sanctions would not apply to such a consortium as it would be an international legal entity. The consortium would be headed by a strategic planning body of a new type, in which leading Russian schools of scientific management would be represented. Bonds would be issued to co-fund the TEPR program, and regional administrations would allot lands for the TEPR to cross.

The TEPR program would encompass a diversity of investment projects, which would be unfeasible without long-term low-interest loan mechanisms that exist in the EAEU and China.

The Trans-Eurasian Belt Development (TEPR) program may become part of the mechanism to integrate development strategies of Russia and China.

All this means a major role for the proposed Economic Belt of the Silk Road of Innovations - 21st Century as a new platform for bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the integration of the EAEU with the Silk Road Economic Belt, a program propounded in the Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the Chinese People's Republic.



Sergey Bazdnikin, *Deputy Director, Foreign Policy Planning Department, RF Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

Earlier on, an opinion was expressed here that the world is getting harsher and less predictable. I agree that the world is undergoing large-scale changes that are highly dynamic and affect all spheres of international relations. The world is changing faster than one can trace. This means that any forecast - and it's never worth making forecasts anyway - is a theoretical exercise

pure and simple. There are so many players in the international arena, such contradictory trends and such turbulent processes, that it results in a variety of developments that grows in geometric progression.

It is obvious that the world's conflict potential is growing. It is just as obvious to us that there still is a lot of uncertainty about global affairs, and, moreover, world history is at a turning point today, which makes the situation more complicated. Most likely - many experts take this view, by the way - we stand on the threshold of global changes that we still can't fathom completely. It can hardly be disputed that capitalism has reached certain limits in its development and needs some deep-going transformations.

In this connection, I want to say that we - I mean the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - have no doubt that it is essential to identify key trends of global development because, regardless of what turns history takes, it is these trends that will set the stage. We have formulated our views clearly enough. They are reflected in Russia's National Security Strategy and Foreign Policy Concept. The latter is adopted once every four years.

Surely, the Middle East and North Africa are experiencing serious upheavals caused by ethnic and religious conflicts and an unprecedented outbreak of terrorism and extremism.

We see the potential further degradation of the situation as an extremely serious threat to international stability and security, and this is precisely the reason why we say that we are open to cooperating on Syria with our Western partners despite everything.

That is the way we see the situation. At the same time, we are always open to dialogue with the scholarly community, and that is why we value this conference very much.



Sergey Lankin, *Acting Head of the RF MFA Office in Simferopol (Russia)*

Representatives of the public and political organizations as well as the expert and analytical communities, to say nothing of foreign media, demonstrate a lot of interest in what is going on in Crimea. Even minor occurrences cause a sharp and not necessarily positive response abroad. The Crimean issue is invariably present on the agenda of international talks directly or indirectly related to Russia.

Information related to Crimea is rarely objective and is frequently hostile so that to cause maximal damage to the interests of Russia. In fact, our relations with West concerning Crimea are no longer confrontational - they are better described as a full-scale information war.

Overall, between January and September 2016, the peninsula saw 70 international events involving foreign partners. It will take too much time to mention all countries - there are several dozens of them.

We invariably discuss, in greater or lesser detail, with our foreign guests the legitimacy of the 2014 referendum and the reunification of the Republic of Crimea and Sevastopol with the Russian Federation.

Today, we have accumulated enough experience of such discussions to conclude that, when we talking about the international legitimacy of reunification, our opponents fear that it would become a precedent. Their concerns are easy to explain: in many countries, there are obvious or latent separatist sentiments. This means that, assessing the February-March 2014 events in Crimea, we should take into account that by that time the peninsula was pushed to the brink of bloodshed and a civil war.

The issue of the anti-Crimean sanctions accompanied by all sorts of blockades is as acute as ever. Attempts are being made to isolate the peninsula from the rest of the world; in fact, these actions hit common people or even the poorest and the most vulnerable of them irrespective of nationality and confession and mainly living in the peninsula's northern part. Time has come to realize that it is absurd, illegal and immoral to punish common people for the doings of the people in power in any state.

We should arrive at a balanced and unbiased legal assessment of the Crimean Spring 2014 and to push aside the negative political opinions about this far from simple stretch of history still alive in the West so that to reduce tension around the Crimean issue.



Dmitry Muza, *professor, head of the research department, Donetsk Pedagogical Institute (Donetsk People's Republic)*

THE TWO MAIDANS, that of 2004 and that of 2013/2014, the coup instigated and managed from abroad, the swift withdrawal of Crimea from under Kiev's jurisdiction, the instant "Russian springs" in Kharkov, Donetsk, Lugansk, Odessa, and Zaporozhie can hardly be compared to the Transdnistria, Nagorno-Karabakh, Abkhaz, or South Ossetian conflicts in terms of their intensity, intrigues behind them,

ways of development, involvement of foreign forces, means of settlement (the Normandy format and the Minsk process), or the potential future architecture stemming from them.

It was Donbass and not Crimea that has become a stumbling block for the application by the United States of a new, offensive deterrence doctrine with desire for total control of the Ukrainian project. Donbass is not the scene of an anti-terrorist operation or a civil war. It is the scene of a war of a new type, a war with the use of hybrid warfare, something that involves a diversity of resources and actors. This war is aimed at formatting a new era via a local format.

If Russia sticks to its current line in the Ukrainian crisis, the United States will turn Ukraine into a Vietnam for the Russians, the American hawk promises.

It seems to me that U.S. geopolitics has undergone a paradigm shift. Namely, the United States has changed its geopolitical engineering, going over from the use of "hard" and soft power to setting fire to foreign countries, using flashpoints for the purpose. U.S. military experts have argued recently that today's world is effectively a mosaic of hot spots - Southeast Asia and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, South America, and Mexico. There's room in this mosaic for Russia as well - despite all its internal weaknesses and external risks, the country would be able to achieve economic stability, build a democratic system, and even carry through small-scale wars in the post-Soviet space (!). Following the convention used in this kind of discourse, the experts modestly gloss over the role of the United States in unleashing and sustaining such wars, including mainly the war in Ukraine.

Today, two and a half years since the beginning of the "Russian Spring" in Donbass, each party to the military conflict has its own vision of the future of Donbass, as does the United States, the main architect of the conflict, although the Minsk format was meant to coordinate their positions on quite many points.



Armen Oganesyyan, *Editor-in-Chief of the journal International Affairs (Russia)*

DEAR COLLEAGUES, I would like to stress that this year's conference has been different from the others, there have been more presentations during it, and it has involved more heated debates than the previous conferences did. I hope it has been a very fruitful conference.

Russia is doing a great deal at government level for the development of Crimea. But the Russian business community also needs to take a unanimous attitude, and we have talked about this today as well.

I mean not only the banking system, Sberbank for instance. Believe me, our entrepreneurs have quite a large potential. Of course, there are fears of the sanctions but there should be some of red line. Crimea is part of Russia and we shouldn't bow to those bogeys. What matters here is not only patriotism, non-interference in the internal affairs of our country, and unprecedented political, economic, and information pressure but primarily the well-being and peace of the people who live here, the stable economic and social development of the region, and of the entire country for that matter. Therefore, the Russian business community should keep a reasonable balance and take a responsible approach to this problem.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for giving us this opportunity to hold our conferences in Yalta and for the participation in them of officials from the ministry, diplomats, who professionally handle issues that are raised here.

Many thanks to all the participants in the Yalta 2016 conference. It goes to your credit that these two days have been taken up by presentations and discussions that were so rich in content, profound, and useful.

Notes on the February Revolution

Authors: Svyatoslav Rybas, writer and historian, member of the Public Council of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation

Ekaterina Rybas, writer and journalist



WHAT WAS THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE in the early twentieth century? As a great power it was a rival of other powers - Germany, the UK, France, the North American United States (the USA), and Austria-Hungary. It was not the most developed country industrially and financially; its population was not well educated and was not rich; its elite were no longer close-knit. Its potential, however, was huge; development rates were fast,

military might colossal, domestic market vast, cultural and scientific achievements unrivalled, the business circles passionate, and the intelligentsia unselfish, politically active and opposed to the crown.

On the whole, Russia was a country with the huge territory, where the center was loosely connected with the regions; it was a country of a cold climate to which people had to adjust, of poor soils and inadequate yields, of overstrained population and super-centralization; huge sums of money were poured into defense. The industrial revolution created an educated class that served the country's industrial development and, after a while, became a rival of the system of power. In the political and philosophical sense, it fought for democratic freedoms.

On the eve of World War I, the economic reforms in Russia (carried out by Sergey Witte and Pyotr Stolypin) were still uncompleted. The country was facing a momentous alternative: either to continue modernization to catch up with the West while remaining its raw-material appendage or perform a breakthrough to outstrip its own historical time.

Stolypin did not idealize the peasants. The economic situation demanded a wider domestic market for Russia's developing industry that required an involvement of popular masses into economic activities without seeking their agreement.

The agrarian sector paid for the country's industrialization: the taxes imposed on it were 3-3.5 times higher than those paid by the industrial sector, while further development was impossible because of the rapidly contracting domestic market.

This practice of pumping money into industry ("parasitic capitalism," according to Marx) was destroying the archaic mass culture.

Military spending speeded up inflation making people poorer and irritated. Manikovsky wrote that the owners of private factories "grew disgustingly rich during the blackest period in Russia's history." The stock exchange promptly responded to the enrichment of private business.

The Russian Empire was built by nobles and destroyed by nobles. Throughout nearly 200 years - from Peter the Great who made them "the servants of the autocrat" (wounds or death being the only escape) to Peter III who liberated them from the obligatory service to the Great Reforms

that deprived them of serfs - the first estate was gradually losing its leading positions. It was developing into a paralyzed relative no longer alive and yet not dead. The descendants of the heroes of Poltava, Borodino and Sevastopol became bureaucrats or, having mortgaged and remortgaged their estates in the Nobles Land Bank, became economically dead. (Here a parallel with the Soviet Union's disintegration can be found.)

So far nobody has answered the question: Was the February 1917 Revolution inevitable?

"Now, it is a reasonable view (this writer, among others, adheres to it) that the Russian Revolution was fortuitous, insofar as it was the product of a number of factors in the sudden coming-up together of which no logical pattern can be detected. Many of them if not the hand of chance, could have been different than it actually was."

The Soviet Union and the UK: The Afghan Format of Talks and Consultations in 1941

Author: Yu. Bulatov

Dean, School of International Relations, Professor, Department of World and Russian History, Moscow State Institute (University) of International Relations, Doctor of Science (History)



BY ITS ATTACK at the Soviet Union fascist Germany destroyed the international balance of power. Prime Minister of Great Britain Winston Churchill said in his broadcasted address: "Any man or State who fights against Nazism will have our aid. Any man or State who marches with Hitler is our foe.... That is our policy and that is our declaration. It follows, therefore, that we shall give whatever help we can to Russia and to the Russian people."

The diplomatic and other missions of the United Kingdom in other countries were instructed to promptly revive or establish direct contacts with the embassies and permanent missions of the Soviet Union in their countries.

At the initial stage of the Great Patriotic War, the British side having signed the treaty with the USSR on alliance in the war against Hitlerite Germany on July 12, 1941, repeatedly violated its obligation to "neither negotiate nor conclude an armistice or treaty of peace except by mutual agreement."

The British deemed it necessary to double the first contact between the British intelligence and the Soviet Embassy along the official diplomatic channels: Councilor of the British Embassy Halley arrived to the Soviet embassy as a "special representative" and was received by Councilor Kozlov.

Moscow promptly informed about the details of the first contacts between Councilor Kozlov and members of the British diplomatic mission in Kabul concluded that the British diplomats had received from their government *carte blanche*, but not the powers of decision-making, where the subjects of discussions with Soviet diplomats were concerned. No wonder the process stopped at the stage of discussions and exchange of opinions.

Yury Tikhonov, historian of the Russian special services, has written that Fraser-Tytler was the first representative of the UK in the rank of ambassador who visited the Soviet Embassy in Kabul to meet the ambassador. Both diplomats were restrained since the long years of confrontation or even hostility between the Soviet Union and the UK in Afghanistan had created an "image of an enemy." It should be said that Ambassador Mikhaylov was restrained not only because of the "burden of the past." He knew that the British were planning to play a game with the Russians on the "Afghan platform." According to Councilor Kozlov, in the first months of the Soviet-German war, this British officer, when talking to Chief of Staff of the Afghan Army Omar Khan, never tried to hide the fact that he was not among those who wanted a Soviet victory over fascist Germany.

The Soviet leaders believed that the relations should rest on a political basis needed to clarify the extent of military and political closeness and the scope and size of mutual aid. London, on its side, was convinced that economic and military cooperation with the Soviet Union should have no limits except the limits of the possible.

The British ambassador resumed his "bridge building" efforts: on October 13, he visited the Soviet Embassy to explain that the disharmony in the Soviet and British demarches was due to a technicality: he had been instructed to inform the Afghan premier about the British demarche immediately and report about the results to London. Talking to Soviet Ambassador Mikhaylov, his British colleague did not spare words to point out that the Soviet statement of October 11 was identical to the British one even if better substantiated.

The changes in the development of the relations between the Soviet Union and Great Britain that became obvious after the December 1941 visit of the UK Foreign Minister to Moscow strongly affected the British mission in Kabul. The pause in its relations with the Soviet diplomatic mission ended and the British demonstrated much more activity. Soviet Ambassador Mikhaylov informed the Center that the British mission invited him to organize regular exchange of information about subversive anti-Soviet and anti-British activities of the special services of the Axis powers. The "Afghan channel" of information exchange between Moscow and London again started working vigorously as in the first days of the Great Patriotic War and preserved its importance until the complete rout of fascist Germany in spring 1945. Pavel Sudoplatov, one of the heads of the Soviet security structures in 1941-1945, later wrote that cooperation between the special services of the Allies during the Great Patriotic War had been most successful in Afghanistan.

The Nuremberg Trials: Lessons for Today

Author: O. Melnikova

Head of Division, Press and Information Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation



IN PLANNING the setting up of the International Military Tribunal and an international trial of the main Nazi war criminals, the powers of the anti-Hitler coalition were guided by the principles of inevitable liability and punishment for all the Nazi criminals guilty of mass atrocities.

The Nuremberg trials demonstrated to the whole world fascism's true face, exposed its essence and its plans of eliminating entire states and nations, as well as its heinous mass crimes against peace and humanity.

The main task of the trials was not only to exact retribution and punish the criminal leaders of Hitler's Germany, but also to lay the groundwork in international law for the criminal liability of all

individuals and organizations guilty in the most serious crimes and mass atrocities.

The Nuremberg trials had an extremely important impact on international legal practice and the development of contemporary international law. The principles and norms formulated at the Nuremberg trials and approved by the UN laid the groundwork for all postwar international documents that sought to prevent aggression and war crimes, such as the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948) and the Geneva Conventions for the Protection of War Victims (1949).

The Nuremberg trials, for the first time in world history, ruled that aggression was the gravest international crime against humanity and passed legal judgment on other war crimes.

Today, decades later, this makes all the more outrageous any attempts not only to justify but also to glorify war criminals and portray fascist minions in Estonia, Latvia and Ukraine as fighters for national independence. Russia is resolutely opposed to such attempts.

Today, the world community has been seriously misinformed about the course of World War II. A stereotype has evolved in the West whereby the U.S. forces, without any assistance from the Red Army and the USSR, liberated Europe from fascism.

It is very important for representatives of the younger generation to have access to historical knowledge about those events, and not only in the run-up to the next celebration of Victory Day on May 9.

This highlights the need to create a solid basis in the study of the past war in the context of contemporary threats and challenges to peace, stability, security, and harmony in the international community. These are the lessons of the Nuremberg trials.

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